

A  
DISCOURSE  
OF THE  
NECESSITY  
OF  
PUBLICK WORSHIP:  
AND A  
Discovery of some Mistakes  
and Miscarriages therein.

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By a LAYMAN.

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*Psalm. xcv. 3. The Lord is a great  
God, and a great King above all  
Gods.*

*Ver. 6. O come, let us worship, and  
fall down, and kneel before the Lord  
our Maker.*

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L O N D O N

Printed and Sold by J. Downing in  
Bartholomew-Close near West-Smith-  
field, 1714.

DISCOURSE

OF THE

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OF

PUBLIC WORSHIP:

AND A

DISCOVERY OF SOME MISTAKES

AND MISAPPREHENSIONS THEREIN.

By J. L. M. A.

Psalm. xvi. 2. The Lord is a great  
God, and a great King above all  
Gods.

Ver. 2. O come, let us worship, and  
sing unto the Lord, as we have  
our Maker.

L O N D O N

Printed and Sold by J. DODDING in  
Bucklers Lane near St. Dunstons Church  
1714.



# THE PREFACE.

To my Neighbours,

**D**ivine Providence, which determineth the Bounds of our Habitation, having lately given me a Residence in your Parish, and being bound, not only by the general Rule of our holy Religion, to exhort others daily, lest they be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin. But also since you have been pleased to chuse me Church-Warden, I am now, by the Obligation of an Oath, earnestly to call upon such as neglect a due Attendance on the divine Service of the Church; and observing in this Place, a general Decay of Christianity, what thro' the casting off all Religion and Fear of God, by some, the misguided Zeal and superstitious Conceits of others, and the In-

A 2      differencey,

#### iv The P R E F A C E.

differency, Indecency, and Prophanation of many; I knew no better way to discharge my Duty to God, to my Superiors, and to your Souls, than by putting this following Discourse into your Hands. Its Method or Stile I shall not defend, its Reasons and Arguments I submit to the Authority of the holy Scripture, and where in they shall be found to swerve from that Rule, I here openly renounce, and promise publickly to retract; but if they appear agreeable to God's Word, and founded thereon, they not only deserve Consideration, but demand Obedience. What I have to say in my own Behalf is, that I design'd it for your Good; how far it may be useful to that End I know not; but if it should so far receive the divine Blessing, as to be instrumental in reclaiming any one Person from his Errors or his Vices, how abundantly should I be recompenced for a few Hours spent sometimes on a Sunday Evening, or a rainy Day.

A  
DISCOURSE  
OF THE  
NECESSITY  
OF  
Publick Worship, &c.

**I**F our Care and Concern for any thing ought to be proportionable to its Usefulness to us, or Duration with us, (as undoubtedly it ought, and in all our worldly Affairs it always is) then certainly our Souls ought to be our first and greatest Care, and the securing an Inheritance for them in another World, should be our utmost Con-  
A 3 cern

cern in this ; since 'tis the Soul alone ~~that is capable of Joy and Pleasure,~~  
~~or Grief and Sorrow ;~~ and therefore  
 as the Soul is either happy or misera-  
 ble, so is the Man ; for the Soul in-  
 deed is the Man, and the Loss of our  
 Souls is no less than the Loss of our  
 selves, yea such a Loss as can't be  
 repair'd, even the Loss both of Bo-  
 dy and Soul for ever.

This being so plain as to need no  
 Proof, one would think it needless  
 to perswade Men to take Care of,  
 and to love their Souls ; since there  
 is nothing in this World that can  
 be of so great Concernment to us ; for  
 the *Psalmist* assures us, *that the Mul-*  
*titude of a Man's Riches*  
*Pf. xlix. 7, 8. cannot redeem his Bro-*  
*ther, since it cost more to*  
*redeem his Soul.* And our blessed Lord,  
 who redeemed our Souls, and there-  
 fore must know their Worth, hath  
 told us, that it profiteth nothing if a  
 Man gain the whole World,  
*Mat. xvi. 26. and lose his Soul ;* and that  
 there is nothing a Man  
 can give in Exchange for his Soul.

And yet, notwithstanding all this,  
 there are a Multitude of People , who  
 in

in reality do not love their Souls; that is, they do not seek or endeavour after their true Happiness; for tho' Happiness is the thing all Men desire, and that about which so great a Stir is made in the World, 'tis the Mark at which all Men aim, yet very many do amiss, nay, comparatively, very few do hit it; for it must be consider'd, that the Soul of Man is capable of a twofold Happiness, one, as it lives here in this gross fleshly Body; the other, as it shall live hereafter, in the same Body refined, and made a spiritual Body. Now as the Soul dwells in these earthly Bodies, it is most apt to take Delight in sensual Pleasures, and is very fond of such things as yeild a present Relish to our carnal Appetites; and this is the Happiness which many Men pursue with the most unwearied Diligence, this they toil and sweat for, this they rise up early, and go to bed late, and eat the Bread of Carefulness to obtain; but this is not, this cannot be the proper Happiness of the Soul. The Reason is plain, because this is not the most perfect State of the Soul, its Stay here is very short and uncertain,



tain, compar'd in Scripture to a Hand's Breadth, a Shadow, a Vapour, nay, even to nothing; how fitly is the State of Man in this Life expressed by the Psalmist? *He fadeth away suddenly like the Grass, Psal. xc. 6. in the Morning it is green and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.* His Childhood, Youth, and Old Age, begun and finished the same Day. How then can it be possible, that a Happiness so imperfect, because so short and uncertain, can be agreeable to an immortal Soul? No! A Being which is to live eternal Ages, cannot be satisfied with such fading, childish Pleasures as wax old and die in the very Enjoyment. It will be therefore no useless Enquiry, what that Happiness is, which is proper to the Soul of Man, as it shall live hereafter in a spiritual State, and that is the glorifying God here, in order to the enjoying him eternally hereafter. Or it may be summ'd up in this one Word, *Religion*; which, though it makes so great a Noise in the World, and fills every one's Mouth, seems very little understood by Multitudes of

Peo-

People ; so that it may not be a need-  
less Undertaking to endeavour to ex-  
plain it, that Men may, if possible,  
be convinced, that it is not a thing  
designed for them to wrangle and  
dispute about, but what would, if  
duly considered, transform this spite-  
ful, ill-natured World, into Love  
and Peace ; and is indeed the greatest  
Concern, and the highest Felicity of  
Mankind, both with respect to this  
Life, and that to come,

By *Religion* then is meant, such an  
awful Sense of God, as stirs up in  
our Souls devout Affections towards  
him, and inclines us to worship and  
serve him, in such a manner as is  
most agreeable to his Will, in order  
to procure his Favour and Blessing.

In this Definition of *Religion*,  
there is to be observed the End pro-  
posed, that is, the Favour and Bles-  
sing of God ; and the Means where-  
by that End is to be obtained, that  
is, the worshipping him in an accepta-  
ble Manner. Now as God's Favour  
and Blessing do comprehend all the  
Happiness that we do, or shall, or  
can enjoy ; since every  
good and perfect Gift com- James i. 17.

eth from him. It must by Consequence be the highest Concern of our Lives to procure it: And since the End is so vastly great, the Means by which 'tis obtained must of necessity be proportionable, and effectual to that End, which are the worshipping and serving God acceptably. And that the Worship and Service of God are the Means to procure his Favour and Blessing, appears by what God himself hath declared, that who so offer-

*Psa. l. 23.*

eth him Praise, honoureth him; and that those who honour him, he will honour.

*1 Sam. ii. 30.*

And our Saviour saith, *John xii. 26.* if any Man serve me, him will my Father honour; and,

*John ix. 31.*

if any Man be a Worshiper of God, and doth his Will, him he heareth. All which, with many Texts

of Scripture more, to the same Purpose, that might be added, is enough to confirm the Truth of what I said before, That Religion ought to be the chief Business of our Lives, because 'tis that, and that alone, which can secure to us a Happiness fitted to the Nature of our Souls, and such as will last as long as they do, and that is to all Eternity.

And

And as Religion is the greatest Concern of our Lives, so the Worship of God is the most excellent Part of Religion; as having God, the most excellent Being, for its immediate Object; for *Him only shalt thou serve.* This is *Matth. iv. 10* the Employment of Angels, and of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, who behold the Face of God, and sing eternal Hallelujahs to Him, *Rev. xix. 1, 3, 4, 6.*

Now altho' whatsoever we do, out of a just Sense of God, may be, in some Degree, an Act of Worship; since it's done to God's Honour, which may as effectually be done by Actions as by Words, and oftentimes better; yet that which we more strictly term *Worship*, is the bowing down our Souls before God; the lifting up of our Voice, our Hands, Eyes, and Hearts to Him in Prayers, Praises, and Thanksgivings, as to the All-sufficient, and only Disposer of all the good things which we either have or hope for. This, when it is sincere, hath a powerful Influence on our Lives and Actions; for what Man, who awfully adores the Majesty

jeſty of God, can at the ſame time deſpiſe his Authority? or how can he ſincerely beg the Forgiveness of his own Sins, who unmercifully revenge an Injury done him by his Neighbour? Such Hypocrites do but indeed deceive themſelves, when they attempt to flatter the All-ſeeing God.

But when a Man, out of a deep Senſe of the Power, Maſteſty, and Goodneſs of God, doth frequently addreſs himſelf to Him in Acts of Devotion, it will beget in him ſuch Apprehenſions of the divine Maſteſty as will diſpoſe his Soul to that Fear of God which perfecteth Holineſs, and wherein is ſtrong Confidence, and is that powerful Principle which influenceth the Lives of devout and pious Men; and in ſhort, the whole of Religion is in the holy Scriptures frequently expreſſed by the *Fear of the Lord*; for it is ſuch an habitual Senſe of the Glory and Maſteſty of God, as will awe our Souls into the moſt profound Reverence and Adoration.

By



By all which it is plain, that the Worship of God is the most excellent Part of Religion ; to which I shall add, that Publick Worship is the most excellent kind of divine Worship. This I take to be evident from the very Nature of divine Worship ; for Worship, as I have before noted, is that Part of Religion, of which God is the sole Object ; and the proper Notion of worshipping God, is *to honour him* ; and all the Parts of Worship are but so many Expressions of his Honour, as they are Testimonies of our Dependance on his Providence, Submission to his Will, Trust and Affiance in his Mercy and Goodness, &c.

Now, without Dispute, that Honour is the greatest which is the most publick ; nay, it is impossible to imagine, that a Man can have any due Apprehensions of the infinite Perfections of God, such as his Holiness, Power, Justice, Goodness and Bounty ; and at the same time forbear to express these Apprehensions by such visible Acts of Devotion, as are most apt in themselves to testify to the whole World our reverential Esteem  
of

of Him. A remarkable Instance of this Truth we have *Psal. xxxiv.* which was penn'd, as the Title shews, on occasion of that Deliverance *David* had when he fled to *Abimelech*; and afterward to *Achish*; an Account whereof you have *1 Sam. xxi.* Which Deliverance, tho' peculiar to *David*, and obtained by an unjustifiable, as well as an uncommon Artifice, yet *David*, in Memory of God's Mercy, composed this Psalm for the publick Worship of God in the Temple, and deliver'd it, as he did others, to the Master of Musick, to be sung as an Hymn, or Song of Praise and Thanksgiving, by the Congregation.

And at *Verse 3.* he earnestly stirs them up to join with him in this great Act of Worship, saying, *Magnifie the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together.* Which Practice of his seems but to speak the Voice of Nature; for all Nations under Heaven, how much soever they differ in the Objects of their Worship, or the manner of performing it, have all agreed in this one Particular of making it solemn and publick. And indeed the Reasons why we worship God,

God, oblige us to worship him pub-  
 licly; for we worship him because  
 he is the most excellent and supreme  
 Being, the only Creator, and sove-  
 reign Ruler of the whole World, the  
 Maker and Judge of all Men, from  
 whom we receive Life, and  
 Breath, and all things; *Act. xvii. 25.*  
 who preventeth us with  
 the Blessings of Goodness; *Psal. xxi. 3.*  
 who causeth his Sun to  
 rise on the Evil and on the  
 Good, and sendeth Rain on  
 the Just and on the Unjust. *Mat. v. 45.*  
 Fortho' we are doubtless obliged to  
 pay him our private Homage for the  
 particular Blessings he bestows on us,  
 yet are we to adore him chiefly, as he  
 is a publick Benefactor:  
 As he is the God and Fa-  
 ther of us all, as he hath  
 made of one Blood all Na-  
 tions to dwell on the Earth;  
 as he openeth his Hands,  
 and satisfieth the Desire of  
 every living thing; as he  
 spared not his own Son, but  
 delivered him up for us  
 all. These are some of  
 the greatest Mercies we enjoy, with

rela-

relation to the Life that now is, and also that to come; and these God gives to all Mankind in general; and therefore it is plain, that he is robbed of the Honour due unto his Name; if our Thanksgivings are not as publick as his Blessings.

By what I have said, I would not be so understood as if I made light of private Devotion; nor by no Means, it is absolutely necessary, of vast Advantage, and when rightly performed, is an undoubted Sign of the Sincerity of our Hearts towards God; but what I argue for is, that notwithstanding private Devotion is so high a Privilege, and so necessary a Duty; yet publick Worship is more excellent, and by consequence to be prefer'd before it, whenever they interfere, which seldom happens, tho'tis often pretended.

Enough hath been said, tho' much more might be added, to prove that Religion is the greatest Happiness of our Nature, and therefore ought to be the chief Business of our Lives: and likewise that the Worship of God is the most excellent Part of Religion; being that which will fill our Minds with such an affectionate  
and

and grateful Sense of the infinite Glory and Goodness of God, and by continual Praises and Thanksgivings here, will dispose and fit our Souls for the Musick of Heaven, that *Song of Moses, and of the Lamb, for ever and ever.* I have also proved,

*Rev. xv. 3.*

that the Worship of God in Publick is the most excellent kind of divine Worship, since the far greater part of the good things we ask of God, or Blessings we praise him for, are such as he bestows on us in common with others; and private Acknowledgments can't be suitable Returns for such publick Mercies.

From the whole then, this necessary and eternal Truth most evidently appears, That it is the indispensable Duty of every Man to lay hold of all Opportunities to worship God in the publick Assemblies of Christians. Or, in fewer and plainer Words, that every one ought constantly to go to Church.

Now altho' this is plain, even to bare natural Reason, and is further evident from many Texts of Scripture, so that scarce any Part of our ho-



holy Religion is more plainly taught us ; yet, alas ! how very few are there who make any Conscience of practising it as they ought ; nay, how many are there, who scarce ever worship God at all ? And here, what Grief and Sorrow is sufficient to bewail and lament the Stupidity and Folly, the base Degeneracy, and vile Ingratitude of such Men ? The Consideration whereof hath given Occasion to this short Discourse, hoping that God, who often chooseth the

*weak things of the World*  
 1 Cor. ii. 27. *to confound the things that*  
*are mighty,* will so far  
 bless this my well-meant Undertaking, as that it may be useful to instruct those who oppose themselves, if God, peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, that so they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are thus  
 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. *taken captive by him at his Will.*

To render this Design as useful as I can, I shall pursue it in the following Method ; and endeavour to shew,

I. The

I. The great Sin of those who, for want of a due Sense of Religion, absent themselves from God's publick Worship.

II. The dangerous Mistakes of those, who forsake the Communion of the Church, upon a Pretence of Conscience, and for Fear of Sin.

III. The great Miscarriages, which many who profess to be of the Church are most scandalously guilty of.

I, I am to shew the great Sin of those, who absent themselves from God's publick Worship; for want of a due Sense of Religion. And those are either such who are Atheists by Principle, who do not believe there is a God in the World, and such cannot think themselves bound to pay him any Worship; these are called speculative Atheists; these I shall say nothing to, as not being the Persons this Discourse is intended for, but shall speak directly to the other sort of Atheists: I mean such as are Atheists by Practice; such who pretend to believe the Being of a God, yet live as if there was none: Men who

who are so much taken up with the things of this Life, as to be wholly unconcerned for that to come; who never take any Thought how to escape the Wrath of God, or obtain the Glories of an eternal Life;

*Mark iv. 19. the Cares of the World, the Deceitfulness of Riches, and the Lusts of other things, do so entirely possess their Souls, that they are senseless to the very Thoughts of God, and by consequence perfectly unconcern'd about his Worship; their Lives and Actions are a Contradiction to the Rule of their Religion: they profess indeed, that*  
*Titus i. 16. they know God, but in their Works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and unto every good Work Reprobate.*

In order to convince such Men of the great Sin they are guilty of, I would beg them, by all that is dear and precious to them, by the Love of God, by the Merits of Christ Jesus, and by all their Hopes of Happiness in the World to come, seriously to consider these few things.

1. That

I. That Irreligion, or a Contempt of God's Worship, is a great Affront to Almighty God. The *Atheist*, who denies that there is any God; or the *Heathen*, who makes a God of the Work of his own Hands, seem both to come far short of the irreligious Man in Wickedness; for the *Atheist* doth not worship God, because he owns none; and to worship what he doth not believe in, is meer Mockery; and indeed his Sin doth not consist so much in refusing to worship God, as it doth in not knowing him, when he hath so many ways revealed himself to the World, as that it leaves him inexcusable in his Ignorance and Unbelief: And for the *Heathens*, altho' they paid Homage to Creatures, and sometimes to those of the basest sort, such as Mice, Frogs, and such like; and tho' they worshiped these Gods in such a vile and inhumane manner, as was a Reproach and Dishonour to the divine Nature; yet was it some sort of Acknowledgment of the Power & Providence of a Deity.

But the irreligious Man affronts that God he owns, by denying him that Worship which must necessarily be-

belong to him as a God ; for whosoever believes there is a God, must believe him to be a most perfect and excellent Being, the Maker and Preserver of all Men, and by consequence of himself ; and to refuse to worship such a Being, is an undeniable Argument of a contemptible Opinion of Him. Upon this Principle it is that God himself argues by the Prophet, against those that despised his Name ; *A Son, saith he, honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master : If I then be a Father, where is mine Honour ? and if I be a Master, where is my Fear ?* And in the last Verse of that Chapter are these remarkable Words ; *But cursed be the Deceiver, which bath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing ; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen.* If then the Lord will curse those, who offer unto him an imperfect Sacrifice, when they have a better ; how dreadful shall be the State of those who acknowledge him to be a great King, yet never sacrifice to him at all?



2. Consider that he who refuseth to worship God, is guilty of the vilest Ingratitude in the World. Now Ingratitude, amongst Men, is look'd on as the most infamous Crime that can be; yea, the Heathen could say, That to call a Man ungrateful, was to speak all that is evil of him at once; and the Reason is, because Goodness and Kindness are the Glory and Perfection of our Nature, and Ingratitude, being a Violation of the Obligations which Goodness and Kindness hath laid on us, must by consequence be the greatest Infamy and Reproach to us. Thus, as it was God who at first gave us a Being, and who still continues to afford us Life, and all the Comforts and Blessings which Life makes us capable of enjoying; so are we under the strongest Ties of Gratitude, to praise and adore him for it. But that unspeakable Mercy of his, in sending his most beloved Son into the World, to take our Nature upon him, to bear our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, to be made Sin for us, who did no Sin; and all this to redeem us from

1 Pet. ii. 24.  
Verse 22.

from that Misery into which Sin had brought us, and set us in a State of Favour with God, thro' Rom. iii. 25. *Faith in his Blood.* This!

This is such a Miracle of Mercy, such abundant Grace and Love, as should fill our Souls with Love and Gratitude, and our Mouths with endless Praises, and Thanksgivings.

This should make us cry out in Raptures with holy David, O give Thanks unto the Lord; for Psal. cxvii. 1, *he is gracious, and his Mercy endureth for ever.*

Let them give Thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed. Psal. lxxxi. 22, *Unto Thee will*

23. *I sing, O Thou holy One of Israel; my Lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto Thee; and so shall my Soul, whom Thou hast redeemed.* He

who, on account of the infinite Wisdom and Almighty Power of God, is not constrain'd to fear the Lord, and tremble at his Presence, is as unreasonable and stupid as a Beast; but he who can reflect on that Love of

God that exceedeth Knowledge, whereby, when we Eph. iii. 19. Rom. v. 10. *were Enemies, we were re-*  
*conciled*

conciled to him by the Death of his Son,  
 who became the Author  
 of eternal Salvation unto Heb. v. 9:  
 all them that obey him.

He, I say, who can think of this,  
 and forbear to return the Homage  
 of Praises, Adorations, and Thanksgivings,  
 to so good, so gracious a God, hath the Ingratitude of a Devil.

3. Consider, that to neglect the  
 Worship of that God in whose Name  
 we are baptized, is the greatest  
 Perjury that can be. *Baptism* is the  
 Badge and Livery of a Christian,  
 that which represents to us our  
 Profession; it is not only the Seal  
 of that Covenant of Grace which  
 God hath made with Mankind in  
 Jesus Christ, but also it is that Pledge  
 or Obligation by which we bind our  
 selves to God for the Performance  
 of our Part of the Covenant. For  
 as Covenants among Men are usual-  
 ly sealed by both Parties, which  
 Seal is the Ratification of the Co-  
 venant; so whenever it pleased God  
 to make or renew his Covenant with  
 Mankind, he vouchsafed to confirm  
 it to them by some Federal Rite,

B

whereby

whereby the things stipulated are mutually ratified; thus the Covenant

God made with Noah  
*Gen. vi. 18.* had the Ark and the Box

*Chap. ix. 13.* for the Seals of those

*1 Pet. iii. 21.* Covenants. So also the

Covenant God made

with Abraham, was seal-

ed by the Sacrament of

*Rom. iv. 11.* Circumcision, a Seal of the

Righteousness of the Faith

which Abraham had before he was cir-

cumcised: Thus the Covenant God

made with Israel by Moses, had the

cloudy Pillar, and their passing thro'

the red Sea, for Seals; in which, the

Apostle saith, they were

*1 Cor. x. 2.* baptized unto Moses. E-

ven for the Covenant

God made with Mankind in Jesus

Christ, hath Baptism for a Seal; for

in Baptism God on his Part seals to

us the Pardon of our Sins,

*Heb. viii. 12.* Grace and Strength to en-

verse 10. able us to do his Will,

*Rom. ii. 7.* and eternal Glory with

him in Heaven, to crown

our Obedience. Man on his Part,

sealeth to him his stedfast Faith in

the

the Promises of God, Repentance from dead Works, *Acts viii. 37.*  
 a Renovation of Life, and a Renunciation of all the *Acts ii. 38.*  
 Enemies of Christ and his Kingdom, which are Sin, *Rom. vi. 4.*  
 the World, and the Devil; as being consecrated to the Service of God. Hence the Apostle calls it, *The Answer* *1 Pet. iii. 21.*  
*of a good Conscience.* And in this Sense are those Words of the Apostle St. Paul to be understood, where he saith, *The Foundation of God* *2 Tim. ii. 19.*  
*(or as it may be as properly render'd, the Obligation or Compact of God)*  
*standeth sure, having this Seal, (as it were with two Inscriptions, the one affix'd by God, thus,) The Lord knoweth them that are his;*  
*that is, he owneth, accepteth, and eternally rewardeth all his Covenant-Servants.* The other Inscription affix'd by those who enter into Covenant with him thus: *Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ*



depart from Iniquity; that is, every one, by undertaking the Faith and Profession of Christ, obligeth himself to walk in his Ways, and avoid the Paths of Sin. And hence it was that the Primitive Christians called Baptism *Sacramentum*, a *Sacrament*, or Oath, which we take to be the Servants and Soldiers of Christ, in Allusion to the Custom of the *Roman* Soldiers, being engaged by an Oath, to fight against all the Enemies of their Prince, and to obey all his Commands; which Oath was by them called *Sacramentum*. In short, by *Baptism* we are consecrated to the Service of God, we yeild up our selves to him to be at his Command, nay, to be wholly his; for the Apostle assures us, that those

who are baptized into  
Gal. iii. 27. *Jesus Christ*, have put on

*Christ*; that is, are Parts or Members of Christ, and should obey him, as the Members of our Bodies obey the Head. Now from hence it appears, that being thus devoted to Christ, if we do at any time wilfully and habitually renounce that Service which we have so solemnly vowed

vowed to perform, we are the vilest Apostates in the World, guilty of the worst of Perjury, the being sworn to God himself.

4. I shall add, as a further Argument of the exceeding Sinfulness of this Practice, that it leads Men directly to Apostacy. This the Apostle to the *Hebrews* assures us of, *Chap. x. Verse 23, 24, &c.* where he exhorts them to *hold fast their Profession of Faith without wavering. — Not forsaking the assembling themselves together, as the Manner of some is.* And gives this as a Reason of the Exhortation; for if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation that shall devour the Adversaries. From this Passage of the Apostle, these two things are evident: *First*, That the forsaking the Assemblies of Christians, is a quitting the Profession of our Faith; and *Secondly*, That such a renouncing of our Faith, is so great a Sin, as that God will not forgive, at least not without an extraordinary Repentance. For the

Severity of which Sentence the Apostle gives this Reason, *He that despised Moses Law, died without Mercy*; (which Law was but a Shadow of good things to come,) of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God? &c. And do ye thus provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are ye stronger than he? Be not deceived, Sirs, the Lord will not be mock'd, he will pour out his Indignation and Fury upon the Families that call not on his Name. And the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you. But whoso offereth Praise, he glorifieth him; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will he shew the Salvation of God.

I will I come in the next Place to  
 shew the dangerous Mistakes of those  
 who forsake the Communion of the  
 Church, upon a Pretence of Conscience,  
 and for Fear of Sin. And here I fore-  
 see I shall say such things as will  
 seem sharp to some Persons, but  
 there are many severe Truths which  
 are sometimes necessary to be spo-  
 ken, and such Patients as cannot bear  
 the searching of their Wounds, of-  
 ten miscarry under more gentle Me-  
 thods of Cure. But God is my Wit-  
 ness, I have no Intent to anger any  
 (Man), and for that Cause shall con-  
 fine my self to such Arguments on-  
 ly, as seem necessary for clearing the  
 Point in Hand; avoiding as much  
 as possible every thing that may  
 seem to exasperate; for I take it as  
 far Rule, that those who endeavour  
 to please God, and save their Souls,  
 ought to be treated with the great-  
 est Compassion, and most tender Re-  
 gard, whenever they mistake the  
 Means of attaining it. And the bet-  
 ter to avoid any Harshness in this  
 Discourse, I shall wave every thing  
 that looks like Disputation; and in-

stead of arguing the Necessity of Church-Communion, shall apply myself closely to the Consciences of these Men, which, I hope, may have a better Effect than disputing generally hath, and prove a more powerful way of Conviction, to all well-meaning Persons, than the most unanswerable Reasons have hitherto done. And in order to discover the Sincerity of his Heart, I would entreat every Dissenter, as he hopes to acquit himself at the dreadful Appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ to Judgment, seriously to ask himself these following Questions, (*viz.*)

1. Whether he did ever thoroughly and impartially consider, *That it is a very great Sin to make Divisions and Separations in the Church of Christ?* Now the Sinfulness hereof appears, not only from those many strict Commands the Gospel gives us to Love and Union, too many to be cited in this Paper, but also from those terrible Denunciations the Scriptures give against *Gal. v. 19, &c. Strife, Seditions, and Heresies,* that they are such Works of the Flesh, as exclude Men



Men from the Kingdom of God. And the Apostle affirms, that those who cause Divisions, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, *Rom. xvi. 17,* but their own Belly. This *18.*

being so, one would think that those who affect to be called Men of tender Consciences, should not so hastily engage in such a Separation until they had thoroughly examined the Reasons, and were, upon good Grounds, satisfied of the Necessity thereof. For he who seriously considers must know, that it is a Sin to separate, without a just Cause, from a National Church, as well as to join in an idolatrous Worship; since both are put in the same Catalogue.

And an upright Man is *Gal. v. 19, 20.* equally careful to avoid every Sin. If then it be consider'd, that the far greater Part of our Dissenters are incapable of examining the Reasons of their Separation; since the things in Controversie are above their Capacities: and among those few who are capable, how many there are who neglect to examine it as they ought, that is, impartial-

ly to consider both Sides of the Question; And that the Want of such an Examination must render them guilty of a very great Sin, in breaking the Peace and Unity of the Church, without knowing any Reason for so doing; these things, I say, being consider'd, you will find the Necessity of being very well assur'd that the Terms of our Communion are sinful, before you will presume to separate from it; since the Want of such good Assurance will involve you in the Guilt of Schism, should the Cause of your Separation be never so justifiable; for, as he who swears what he doth not know, is perjured, tho' he swears Truth: So he who separates without Examination, separates not out of Obedience to the Law of God, but of Disobedience to the Law of the Church, and so plungeth himself into that State, which the Apostle thought deprived Men, not of the Means of Salvation only, but of Salvation it self. *Eph. iv. 14, 15, 16.* When you have well consider'd this Question, I would beg you to ask your Souls a Second, (viz.) 2.

*Rom. viii. 17.*  
*compar. with*  
*Gal. v. 19, &c.*

2. *Whether your Separation from the establish'd Church be upon true Principles of Conscience?* A full Examination of this Matter is highly necessary, since a Mistake therein will be of fatal consequence to your Souls; for, as a Conscience well directed, is indeed beyond the Controul of any earthly Power, having the Authority of Heaven to plead in its Justification, and therefore neither will, nor ought to yeild or comply to the Commands of Men, whenever they contradict the Commands of God. So, on the other Hand, a bare Pretence of Conscience, in disobeying our Governours, either in Church or State, and thereby disturbing the Peace of both, or either, is such a high Provocation to God, and an Affront to our Superiors, as calls for severe Punishments in this Life, and more dreadful ones in that to come; which shews the Necessity of being rightly inform'd in this Case. And that many who talk much of Conscience, and would be thought to govern their whole Lives by its Direction, are yet very ignorant in the Nature and Office of it, seems evident

dent from the improper and impertinent Use they make of the Word *Conscience*: Thus they often say, *I think in my Conscience, I believe in my Conscience, or my Conscience tells me it is thus or thus*; when they mean no more by it than only that it's their Opinion or Judgment that it is so or so. In order therefore to give such Men a more perfect Understanding herein, I shall attempt to shew them what *Conscience* is, and about what it is employ'd. Now *Conscience* is a Power or Faculty in Man, whereby, having compar'd his Actions with the Laws of God, he passeth a Judgment on them accordingly, approving them when they agree with, and condemning them when they contradict the same. This I take to be a true Definition of *Conscience*; and by it you see that God's Laws, or the holy Scriptures, are the Rule or Guide of our *Conscience*; and from hence it appears, that he who rightly pleads *Conscience*, pleads God's Authority. And of this Truth we have an evident Example in the Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. John*, who, when they were commanded by the Rulers of the People  
and

and Elders of Israel,  
 not to speak at all, or teach  
 in the Name of Jesus;  
 when they were com-  
 manded before by him,  
 to preach the Gospel unto  
 every Creature; their An-  
 swer was, Whether it be  
 right in the sight of God,  
 to hearken unto you, more  
 than unto God, judge ye?  
 or as they after express  
 it, We ought to obey God  
 rather than Men. Where  
 you see the only Excuse they had  
 for disobeying the Laws of their Ec-  
 clesiastical or Civil Governours, was  
 a Law of God to the contrary.  
 And from hence it appears, that  
 Conscience is concern'd in all Cases  
 where God hath given us any Law  
 or Precept, and not elsewhere; for  
 where no Law is, there  
 is no Transgression; and  
 to pretend Conscience  
 for refusing those things which God  
 hath no where forbid, or for doing  
 what he hath no where commanded,  
 is, in effect, saying, The  
 Lord saith, albeit he hath

Acts iv. 18.

Mark xvi. 15.

Acts iv. 19.

Acts v. 29.

Rom. iv. 15.

Ezek. xiii. 7.



not spoken, and is a teaching for Doctrine (not the Commandments, but)

the Fancies of Men;  
*Rev. xxii. 18. and is an adding to the Words of the Book of God,*

against which so dreadful a Doom is denounced. Having fully digested this Question, be so kind to yourselves, as to ask another, (*viz.*)

3. *Whether, in very deed, you do believe that Communion with the established Church is sinful?* This, however it looks, is not a needless Question, since 'tis observable, that many Men seem Christians at large, and can either go to Church, or to any other separate Congregation, as Interest or Occasion offers; and one would in Charity think, that when they come to Church, they do not think it unlawful so to do; and if they may lawfully come once, why not, always? For if it be lawful to communicate with the national Church, it must certainly be sinful to separate from it; since nothing but sinful Terms of Communion can justify a Separation from an established Church; and could any Man's Conscience tell him, that the Terms of

of our Communion are sinful; it would at the same time tell him, that he ought never to communicate therewith. But there are some who say, that they do indeed believe our Communion is sinful; and for that Reason they neither can, nor will join therein; whom I would entreat to ask themselves this other Question, (*viz.*)

4. *How they came by such a Belief?*  
This is a Question which every Dissenter ought thoroughly to examine himself about; because Men are apt to put Cheats and Fallacies on themselves; and when, thro' Education, Prejudice, or Interest, or by any other unjustifiable Means, they have espoused an Opinion, they with great Assurance pretend to believe it, tho' they never well examined, and seem resolv'd never to examine into the Truth thereof; and therefore can't in any Sense be said to act in Faith therein; and hence it is, that not only the most senseless and absurd, but even the most wild and extravagant Opinions, pass into Articles of Faith, and soon become the only Signs of Grace; and an un-  
govern'd

govern'd Zeal about them, is made the Mark of a real Christian; and when, on that account, they separate themselves from those to whom the Commands of God and the Blood of Jesus have closely united them, they are so far from having any Regrets of Conscience in the Matter, that they think there is so much Merit therein, as shall sanctifie even the other Irregularities of their Lives. That this is so, every Man discerns in others, tho' few or none can see it in themselves: And from hence it appears, how necessary 'tis for Men to examine their Opinions before they believe them. And more especially such Opinions as contradict the Laws of their Ecclesiastical and Civil Governours, and are likely to disturb the Peace of the Church and Nation, which God hath commanded them

*Rom. xii. 18. by all possible Means to preserve.* But an Examination hereof is yet more necessary, since, without it, a Man must be accountable for all the ill Consequences of such Disobedience, be the Cause never so justifiable, to that

God

God who is the Author  
 of Peace, not of Confusion; 1 Cor. xiv. 33.  
 and who hath assured  
 us, that neither the Se-  
 ditions, nor the Hereticks,  
 shall inherit the Kingdom  
 of God. For if I disobey my Go-  
 vernours, without examining the  
 Nature of their Commands, be my  
 Pretences what they will, 'tis evi-  
 dent, that my Refusal doth not pro-  
 ceed from the Unlawfulness of the  
 Command, (since that can't be  
 known till 'tis examin'd) but from  
 a Contempt of that Au-  
 thority, which God, under  
 the Penalty of Damnation,  
 hath commanded me not to resist. But  
 the Necessity of this Examination  
 will appear yet greater from the  
 express Commands of God; I mean  
 not that misapply'd Text, prove all  
 things, which is wrested to justify  
 Mens embracing all the monstrous  
 and vile Opinions of the Age they  
 live in; but there are many other  
 Texts of Scripture, which enforce  
 this Duty on us; I shall name a few,  
 and the First is, Let every  
 Man prove his own  
 Work,

Work, and then shall he have rejoicing  
 in himself alone, and not in another;  
 that is, let every Man so examine  
 his own Actions, as to approve them  
 to God and his own Conscience, and  
 then he shall take Comfort in be-  
 holding himself alone, and not in  
 comparing himself with others whom  
 he judgeth and condemneth. The  
 five six. The next is, *Examine your*  
*2 Cor. xiii. 5* *to know whether you have*  
*ed to stand in the Faith,* *prove your own*  
*selves, &c.* which Duty the Apostle  
 enjoins them, that by such a Trial  
 they might be satisfied of the Power  
 of his Apostleship, and of the Truth  
 of his Doctrine; and so be convinced  
 of the Folly of those who question'd  
 his Commission (*Verse 21*). The last  
 and most last shall mention is, *1 Thess*  
*5. 21* *Be children of Light,* *proving*  
*what is acceptable unto the Lord,* that is, like  
 Christians, searching and approving  
 what is well pleasing to God, and  
 practising accordingly; I say, pra-  
 ctising accordingly; for in these and  
 several other Places of Scripture *to*  
*Prove,* signifies not barely to try,  
 but so to search and examine our  
 Actions,



Actions, by the Law of God, as to  
 find out what is acceptable to him,  
 and to put in Practice what, up-  
 on such Examination, we find to  
 be so; and thereby to approve our  
 selves to God and our own Consci-  
 ences, to have acted sincerely there-  
 in. Was this necessary Duty once  
 well performed; and would Men  
 thus prove what is that good,  
 good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God, and  
 contend earnestly for no-  
 thing but that Faith, Jude iii.  
 which was once delivered  
 to the Saints: I am perswaded our  
 Divisions would soon be at an End;  
 at least, it would have this good Ef-  
 fect, that the far greater Part of  
 our Separatists would leave their  
 Separation, unless they had better  
 Arguments to defend it.  
 I shall conclude this Part of my  
 Discourse with the Words of the Ap-  
 apostle, If there be therefore any Conso-  
 lation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love,  
 if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any  
 Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy,  
 that ye be like-minded, having the same  
 Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind.

Let

*Let nothing be done through Strife or Vain-glory, but in Lowliness of Mind let each esteem others better than themselves, Phil. ii. 1, 2, 3.*

There remains yet one Particular to be spoken to, which was what I at first intended more largely to treat of; but the Two former having taken up more Room than I at first designed, I shall be obliged to contract this; which is to shew,

III. *The great Miscarriages which many, who profess themselves to be of the establish'd Church, are most scandalously guilty of.*

I. And the first I shall mention is, *The great Neglect of the publick Prayers of the Church.* Many there are who do not pretend to be Dissenters, yet very seldom come to Church; the least Excuse is laid hold of to keep them at Home. But having spoken so plainly to these Men, in the first Head of this Discourse, where I treated of the great Sin of *Atheism* or *Irreligion*, under which Head their Practices reduce them, and to which I again refer them; I shall add nothing to what I there said, but speak  
a few

a few Words to others, who, perhaps, come more frequently, but very unseasonably, when the Prayers are almost or quite ended, and think they have discharg'd their Duty to God and the Church, if they come before Sermon is begun. Now, altho' it be true, that *hearing the Word preached* is a Part, yet it is but a Part, and not the greatest of a Christian's Duty ; for there are several other Parts as great, I might say greater than that ; such as *hearing the Scriptures read*; and especially *Prayers, Praises, and Thanksgivings*. And whoever considers the great and wonderful Effects of *Publick Prayer*; and the as great Necessity we are under to perform it, as being the Condition upon which we obtain the Pardon of Sin, and all other Blessings of the Life that now is, and also of that to come, will be at a Loss for Arguments to defend so great an Omission. For my Part, I know nothing that can be assign'd as a Cause of so evil a

Pra-

1 Tim. ii. 1.

Acts iv. 31.

Matt. xviii.

19.

Luke xi. 10.

Practice, but either a brutish Inconsideration of the entire Dependance we have on the Almighty; or a proud and ungrateful undervaluing the infinite Mercies we receive from him. Many there are who live like Swine, whose Eyes are looking downward on their Food, but they scarce ever look up to, or consider the Hand that feeds them. And others have such high Opinions of their own Merit, as to think they receive nothing but what's their due: that whatever they do, or can possess, is owing to their own Industry and Foresight, or the Effect of that Providence which, they think, must crown their Actions with Success. For were not these, or such like, the Causes, it is impossible to imagine how Men could live in the Neglect of so necessary a Duty, as I have before proved the *publick Worship of God to be*, and as will further appear from the many express Commands of God for the Performance of it. How stupid must that Man be, and insensible of his spiritual State, whose

Soul

Luke xviii. 1.

Col. iv. 2.

1 Thess. v. 17.

Rom. xii. 12.

Eph. vi. 18.

Soul is become a Prey to the Malice of the Devil, the Temptations of the World, and the Fury of his own Lusts; and lies languishing under the Rage and Cruelty of all these Enemies, and yet will not so much as beg for Life, nor ask for Help from that powerful and merciful God, who giveth to all Men liberally, and James i. 5. upbraideth not. On the

other Hand, what Pride and Ingratitude must possess that Soul, who neither is, nor hath, nor can hope for any thing but what he must receive from the Bounty and Goodness of that God, to whom he denies the small Return of publick Praise and Thanksgiving! who, tho' he hath nothing that he did not receive, yet glorieth as if he received it not. I Cor. iv. 7.

Would you but once consider, my Brethren, what our gracious Redeemer hath done and suffer'd for us, to purchase the Pardon of our Sins, and a Reconciliation with God; and that God hath declared his Acceptance of the Attonement Jesus Christ hath made for our Souls: that he



he is now become our loving Father, willing to receive us, and to be heartily reconciled to us, notwithstanding our past Offences ; upon Condition only that we confess our Faults, humbly beg his Pardon, earnestly implore his Grace and Assistance, and sincerely endeavour to offend him no more, but for the future to submit to his Will, and obey all his Commands ; if, I say, you would consider this, 'twould fill your Minds with Shame and Self-Abhorrence, that when eternal Life was purchased for you at so dear a Price, and may now be secur'd on such easie Conditions, you should yet neglect so great Salvation, and refuse even to beg the Forgiveness of those Sins, which otherwise will cause your eternal Damnation.

2. Another Miscarriage is, *The indecent and irreverent Performance of divine Worship.* Many there are of our Communion, (if they may be said to be of any Church, who prophane her Ordinances) who with great Warmth upbraid the Dissenters of Indecency in their Worship, yet are guilty of much greater Irreverence

rence in their Addresses to the di-  
 vine Majesty, than what they con-  
 demn in others; for how faulty so-  
 ever our Dissenters may be in the  
 Neglect of that outward Decency,  
 which the Scripture commends, and  
 the Church, in all Ages, hath practi-  
 sed; yet are they serious and de-  
 vout in their Worship, and seem  
 awfully affected with the Apprehen-  
 sion of the divine Presence among  
 them; which, tho' in some Circum-  
 stances deficient, hath at least the  
 Appearance of religious Worship;  
 but for People to approach the Place  
 of God's Worship, and pretend to  
 join in the sacred Offices of Religi-  
 on, and, at the same time, either gaze,  
 smile, whisper, or sleep away the  
 whole Service, is a downright *Pro-  
 phanation*. And others, who take  
 Scandal hereat, yet fall into as great  
 Irreverence, by approaching the glo-  
 rious Majesty of Heaven, in the most  
 solemn Acts of Prayer and Praises,  
 in a Posture of Equality, I mean,  
 Sitting, such as was never expressive  
 of the least Degree of Reverence,  
 either in this or any other Nation  
 of the World; so that the Apostle's

Argument in another Case, may properly be applyed to  
 1 Cor. xi. 14. this, *Doth not even Nature it self teach you?*

Alas! how void must he be of any due Apprehensions of the inconceivable Distance there is betwixt the eternal God and poor frail Man, that dares not approach the Presence of his Fellow-Creature, whose Favour he courts, or whose Displeasure he fears, without the lowest Prostration and most profound Reverence; yet presumes to thrust himself into the Presence of the Great God, to deprecate his Wrath, to beg his Pardon, and implore his Help, &c. on the Success whereof doth depend the eternal well-being of our Souls, without the least Degree of Reverence, or so much as the Shadow of Devotion! I am not ignorant that those unchristian Disputes about the outward Rites and Modes of Worship, have given Birth to this evil Practice; for besides those who, by these fierce Debates, have been wrought upon to reject the decent Administration of religious Offices; there are some, who, tho' they

they dissent not from our Communion, yet retain so much of that Leaven as to be very careless of the Gravity and Seriousness of their Devotion; and many more there are, who, out of an evil Spirit of Opposition, or a senseless Fear of being thought precise and superstitious, appear vain and trifling in divine Worship, least, forsooth, they should be thought *Fanaticks*. These I chiefly address my self to; and were it not that they seem herein to have cast off all Reason as well as Religion, and out of a groundless Fear of Superstition are become perfect *Enthusiasts* and *Madmen*. I should confidently presume a few Considerations would be sufficient to correct this scandalous Behaviour. However, I will endeavour to lay before them one or two of the Consequences of these Principles, and beg they would consider them a little, and then I doubt not but they will return to a better Mind.

And in the first Place I can assure them, that while they appear so furious against Fanaticism, themselves are the greatest *Fanaticks* in the

whole Christian World. For if God is to be worshiped, it must be either outwardly by the Body, or inwardly by the Soul, or both; if by the Soul without the Body, this, in the first Place, is impossible; since the inward Passions of our Souls will discover themselves in our outward Behaviour, and a true Fear of God cannot but express it self in a great Awe and Reverence for him: And in the next Place, 'tis the Opinion of the *Quaker*, and downright *Fanaticism*. If they say, God is to be worshiped outwardly by the Body, why do they not perform it? for the bare Actions of Standing, Bowing, Kneeling, &c. are not in themselves so much as Signs of divine Worship, unless they are done with that Seriousness and Devotion, which are essential to all *Worship*. But in truth, if these Men act upon any Principle, they must believe that God is to be worshiped with an outward bodily Worship, without the least Appearance of outward Devotion, which is a Position more wild and extravagant than was ever yet own'd by any *Fanatick* in the World.

Ano-



Another Consequence of this indecent Behaviour, tho' not a right one, is, That it hardens and confirms Men in their Prejudices, against our Communion ; for, with Men of shallow Thought and short Reasoning, it is impossible to conceive, that the strongest Arguments used in Defence of our most admirable *Liturgy*, proving the Excellency or Usefulness thereof, should be forcible enough to convince a prejudiced Person, that our Worship is any thing else but an outside, format, bodily Exercise ; or (as they love to phrase it) a meer Lip-Labour, when they see it perform'd by such who pretend a high Esteem for our Establishment, and express a great Zeal against those who dissent from it, in such a rude and indecent Manner as would scandalize a Heathen to behold, and make him, as *St. Paul*

saith, *Conclude that we are mad.* 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

Whereas, would all of our Communion worship God with that Degree of Devotion which the holy Offices of our Church do naturally promote, and every where strictly demand ; I dare affirm, the

most violent Dissenter, were he but honest, would be so far convinc'd, as that falling down on Verse 24, 25. his Face, he would worship God, and say, that God was in us of a Truth. Certain I am, that nothing hath contributed more to our unhappy Divisions, than our Irreverence, unless it be what I am now about to speak of, and with which I shall conclude, (*viz.*)

3. *The prophane and wicked Lives of Men professing our Communion.* This, tho' it falls not so properly under the present Consideration, since it relates not immediately to the Worship of God; yet since 'tis of such pernicious Consequence, both to the Persons who are guilty, and to those who blaspheme our holy Religion on that Account, I could not wholly omit it. And here, what Expressions of Grief, what Oceans of Tears, can be sufficient to bewail so great an Evil! That those who profess themselves Christians, and Members of the best constituted Church under Heaven; a Church, whose Doctrines are pure and unmixt, and whose Worship is pious and devout, and whose

whose Offices are fitted to the great  
 Ends of Religion, the glorifying  
 God, and edifying Men; a Mother,  
 whose Breasts are open to all her  
 Children, ready to feed them with  
 the sincere Milk of God's  
 Word, that they may grow  
 thereby, till they all  
 come in the Unity of the  
 Faith, and of the Know-  
 ledge of the Son of God,  
 unto perfect Men, unto the Measure of  
 the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.  
 That those who by the strictest  
 Bonds of their most holy Faith, are  
 obliged to follow his Example, who  
 was holy, harmless, unde-  
 filed, and separate from  
 Sinners; and who gave  
 himself for us, that he  
 might redeem us from all  
 Iniquity; That those, I  
 say, whom God hath called out of  
 Darkness into his marvellous Light,  
 should still walk as Children of  
 Darkness; and altho' they know that  
 the Wrath of God is re-  
 vealed from Heaven a-  
 gainst all Ungodliness and  
 Unrighteousness of Men, should not on-  
 ly

1 Pet. ii. 2.

Eph. iv. 13.

Heb. vii. 26.

Titus ii. 14.

Rom. i. 18, 32.

*ly do the same things, but have Pleasure in those that do them.* Good God! how astonishing is it to observe so universal a Depravation among us, as that we have scarce any thing left to distinguish us from the most barbarous Heathens, besides a better Name, and worse Vices. But, *my Brethren*, this be you assured of, that if you imitate the Practices of Heathens now, you must expect the much sorer Punishment of Apostates hereafter. This, as I said before, hath given the Adversaries of our Communion the strongest Handle against us, and by this Means it is, that the Way of Truth is evil spoken of; and is such an Aggravation of Guilt, as will receive a greater Degree of Punishment than what will be inflicted even on Sodom and Gomorrah, which, as the Apostle Jude saith, *Verse 7.* are set forth for an Example, suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire. For our Saviour hath assured us, that it shall  
 Matt. xi. 24. *be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment, than for those who have seen his mighty Works and repent not.*  
 I shall

I shall conclude with the Words of our blessed Lord, which are enough to make all those to tremble who are guilty in this Matter. *It is impossible but that Offences will come: but Wo unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a Milstone was hanged about his Neck, and he cast into the Sea.*

Luke xvii. 1,

2.

F I N I S.



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